

TITLE: SOCKETBALL GAME SYSTEM AND METHOD OF PLAY

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method of playing a game and, more specifically, to a new game incorporating many aspects of traditional basketball, soccer, and football.

Although beginning with rather humble roots as an "athletic distraction" at a YMCA in 1891, where the original "nets" were made from peach baskets, basketball has grown to become one of the most popular sports throughout the world. A typical basketball game is played on an indoor court that measures 94 feet in length and 50 feet in width. Two elevated baskets flank opposite ends of the court. Two teams of five players each must move the ball down the court towards the basket. The ball is moved either by dribbling the ball as a player runs or by passing the ball from one player to another. Points are scored when a player shoots or slams the ball into the basket. Basketball is a fast-paced game, divided up into four quarters. In collegiate sports, basketball is played in two halves. As long as there is time on the clock, chances are good that the ball will be moving quickly from one end of the court to the other as the teams fight over possession of the ball in attempts of shooting baskets and scoring points.

Soccer, although not as famous in America as basketball, remains the most popular sport in the world. Soccer is wildly popular in Europe and South America, where it is called "football". Soccer has been traced back as far as 1004 B.C. in Japan. In Europe, soccer dates back to the early Olympic games in ancient Rome. Soccer eventually spread throughout all of Europe and, in fact, was actually

banned in England during King Edward's reign of the 1300s because of soccer's incredible popularity. Modern day soccer is played on a field about 100 yards in length and 60 yards in width with goal posts at opposing ends. Soccer is 5 typically played outdoors; however, indoor fields of the same dimensions also exist, though to a lesser extent. Two teams play such that each team attempts to bring the ball down the field to the other team's goal. The ball is moved by kicking, and points are scored by kicking or head-butting 10 the ball into the opposing team's goal. The goals are large nets that are positioned on the ground and are supported by a pair of vertical goal posts. A goalie stands in front of the goal and attempts to block the ball as it is kicked toward the goal. Soccer typically is played in one 90- 15 minute period divided into two halves. Most every second of those 90 minutes is spent in a fast and furious race between goal posts.

While basketball and soccer remain popular sports, it is desirable to have a game with the fast-paced excitement 20 of both soccer and basketball, yet with the versatility of location that only basketball can provide.

It is therefore a principal object of this invention to provide a variation of traditional basketball and soccer that demands virtually all the athletic skills of these 25 sports, but which can be played on any field or court, indoor or outdoor.

A further object of this invention is to provide a new game involving the advancement of a ball across a playing field through dribbling or passing, much like basketball, 30 yet providing large ground-level scoring areas, much like soccer.

These and other objects will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention is directed towards a method of playing a new game with a spherical-shaped ball similar to a basketball, the game including the steps of providing a generally rectangular-shaped playing field with a pair of opposing goal posts, each associated with one of the ends of
10 the rectangular-shaped playing field such that the goal posts define scoring areas perpendicular to and in contact with the playing field. The method further provides first and second teams of players, each team alternatively having possession of the ball and having as an objective to score
15 points by throwing or kicking the ball through the scoring area. The teams accomplish the objective by moving the ball towards the goal by dribbling the ball down the field or by passing the ball to one another.

20 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a plan view of a typical basketball court adapted for use with the present invention; and

Fig. 2 is a plan view of a typical soccer field adapted for use with the present invention.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

A method of playing a new game referred to as "socketball" is disclosed that combines many aspects of traditional basketball, soccer, and football. With
30 reference to Fig. 1, the present invention may be practiced on a typical basketball court 10. Alternatively, the present invention may be practiced on a typical soccer field

12, as shown in Fig. 2. It should be noted that the present invention is of sufficient versatility that it can be practiced on any field or court, indoor or outdoor and is not limited to typical basketball court or soccer field
5 arrangements.

With reference to the drawings, playing fields 10 and 12 of varying dimensions are shown, each with a first end 14, a second end 16, and a midfield or division line 18. First end 14 includes a first pair of goal posts 20, and
10 second end 16 includes a second pair of goal posts 22. Straddling the division line 18 at the center of the playing fields 10 and 12 is a center circle 24, also of varying dimension.

Goal posts 20 and 22 are fixed to the ends 14 and 16 of
15 the playing fields 10 and 12 such that the goal posts 20 and 22 are in contact with the playing fields 10 and 12. Goal posts 20 and 22 stand upright and define a generally rectangular shape. Goal posts 20 and 22 are similar to traditional soccer goal posts, which support a net to create
20 a scoring area. Alternatively, goal posts 20 and 22 may be of any fashion necessary to create scoring areas within the goal posts 20 and 22.

The present invention is practiced with a ball (not shown). The ball is a spherical-shaped inflatable ball,
25 similar to that of either a traditional basketball or soccer ball. Alternatively, any spherical-shaped ball capable of being dribbled and thrown may be used.

The present invention is practiced with two opposing teams. Each team is comprised of six individuals of which
30 one person is a goalkeeper. Alternatively, the teams may be made up of any number of individuals and may include all-male or all-female compositions.

The present invention is practiced in three periods, each of 15 minutes in duration. One time out is allowed by each team during each period. Alternatively, the duration of the game may be altered to create halves, quarters, and
5 so forth.

The objective of the present invention is to score points. One point is awarded when a player on one team dribbles the ball over the opposing team's end line. Two points are awarded when a player on one team throws or kicks
10 the ball into the net or across the end goal line.

In practice, the present invention is initiated by a jump ball at the center circle 24 of the playing fields 10 and 12. In such an arrangement, the individual team players are assembled around the center circle 24, and the ball is
15 thrown upward by a referee. The teams contend for possession of the ball. The team with possession of the ball must move the ball down the playing field 10 or 12 towards the opposing team's goal posts 20 or 22. The ball is advanced by dribbling the ball as the player with
20 possession of the ball runs. Additionally, a player of one team may pass the ball to another player of the same team when confronted by a player of the other team.

When a player of one team approaches the goal posts 20 or 22 of the opposing team, the player can score points, as
25 described above, either by dribbling the ball past the opposing team's end line 14 or 16 or by throwing the ball into the scoring area of the opposing team's goal 20 or 22 past the goalkeeper. When an unsuccessful attempt to score a goal is made, possession of the ball is decided by another
30 jump ball at the center circle 24 of the playing field 10 or 12. Should a player of one team score points, a player of the opposing team must kick off like football from the end

line 14 or 16. During any such kick off, the players of the opposing team must be no closer than 25 feet from the end line 14 or 16.

A player cannot hold the ball for more than three
5 seconds before dribbling or passing. If a player holds the ball for more than three seconds, the ball is turned over to the opposing team. A jump ball is used to remedy any disputes of possession between players of opposing teams.

It is therefore seen that by providing large ground-
10 level scoring areas, much like soccer, by advancing the ball across a playing field through dribbling or passing, much like basketball, and by kicking off after a goal is made, much like football, this invention permits a fast-paced and exciting game that can be played on any field or court,
15 indoor or outdoor.